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THE ANTI-UNION.

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No. XXVI.

TO THE
EDITORS of the ANTI-UNION

GENTLEMEN,

THE main argument so largely insisted on by Mr. Pitt, in his speech of Thursday, Jan. 31, is, that the adjustment of 1782, was not final. For this purpose he has cited the authority of our Speaker, not so much with a view of paying respect to that authority, as to fix upon him the charge of inconsistency. Now it appears to me that all his declamation upon this subject, is totally irrelevant; because even admitting for argument sake the case to be as he would represent, this by no means proves the necessity of resorting to an Union, for the purpose of supplying the defects of that system; inasmuch as it is maintained by the Speaker, and a thousand other wise and able men, that proper remedies can be applied to the case, without destroying the independence of our Parliament. If the settlement of 1782 cannot strictly be pronounced final, it at least left very little to be adjusted; and that little of such a nature, as admits fair and amicable negotiation between the Parliaments of both kingdoms. But I will not hesitate to say, that were this even impracticable, the independence of the nation, and the incalculable benefits arising from a resident legislature, acquainted with the character, interests, and temper, of the people whom they represent, would be too great a price for the adjustment of matters now in question. That system, imperfect as it may be, has hitherto worked well; it has effected an unparalleled increase of commerce, wealth, and manufactures, among us. And here we are to look for one of the grand causes of the present attempt. The British Minister begins to look upon these growing interests with a jealous eye. Having weighed down England with an immense debt, and exhausted every scheme of finance for supply, he casts a longing look to the treasury here; and distrustful the liberality of the Irish Parliament, which has never been wanting in this virtue, he would be glad to take the management of the whole revenues into his own hands. Let him beware, however, how he pushes this attempt. With the example of America before his eyes, he must be sensible that no free nation can submit to be taxed by a foreign Parliament. I remember the same offer was made to that great and wise people, which is now held out to us; but they were too enlightened to accept the terms. They laughed at the idea of transporting a few members to England; which

could only, in the first instance, expose their integrity to corruption, and in the next, render their most virtuous efforts unavailing. They did not decline contributing to the exigencies of the empire, but refused to obey the mandates of a tax-gatherer. There is no man acquainted with the character of Ireland, who must not allow her readiness in acts of national justice and generosity. A financier will succeed better in trusting to these qualities, than he can by attempting to steal away and monopolize the public purse.

After citing the arguments and authorities of leading members in both Parliaments, to prove that the system of 1782 was not final and complete, but which have no relation whatsoever to the question of an Union, Mr. Pitt proceeds to shew from experience, its inadequacy to secure the connexion between the two countries, upon a lasting basis. Upon this ground he refers to the instances of the regency and the war. In the first, he says that it was accident alone which secured the identity of the executive power. Were this assertion true, there are persons who might answer, that all the difficulties and embarrassments of such a state of things, would have been justly chargeable upon the British Parliament; for it is conceived by many to be a principle inseparable from hereditary monarchy, that the Heir Apparent of the Crown, should, without dispute, under the unhappy circumstances of the case, have been made Regent; and they consider this principle equally obligatory upon the Parliament of Ireland, with the Act of Settlement. But the assertion is utterly false, and may be confuted by the Minister's own words on that occasion, as well as by the admission of the whole Parliament of England. Mr. Fox had contended for the right without the interference of Parliament. Mr. Pitt insisted upon the authority of Parliament, but at the same time admitted that the Prince of Wales, though denied the right, had yet an insuperable claim to the Regency. Now I ask, after this, can the identity of the executive, on that occasion, be said to be owing to accident? Or would it not rather be thought the strangest accident in the world, if the English Parliament had, after such a declaration in favour of the Prince's claim, thought of any other appointment? But, after all, is not this a matter that could very easily be adjusted, so as to prevent all possibility of difference in future? I am sure to a man of plain understanding, there is no difficulty in the case, whatever may be said by cunning and interested politicians.

The second point to which he refers is the French war; and here, as usual, he opens his rhetorical stores,

and rings the everlasting changes of sounding words: "Terms," he says, "which once were represented as unmeaning declamation," and which I confess I think so still. Every hour convinces me that the unmeasurable ambition of France (which I abhor as much as any man living) is to be ascribed to this cursed war, and the machinations of the British minister; but whatever may be my private sentiments, the parliament of Ireland have since its first commencement entered fully into the cause; scarce the form of a debate has been maintained upon this subject, although the people without doors shewed an early aversion to its principle, and in the progress great dissatisfaction at its conduct. The alarm then raised by Mr. Pitt is, like many of his others, the mere creature of his own imagination, or to speak more correctly, the fiction of his political cunning—for how stands this question upon constitutional grounds? The king is invested with the power of declaring war; the parliament has no jurisdiction beyond the supplies: From the moment the king of Ireland declares himself at war with France, all his subjects of Ireland are, by the law and constitution, in the same state of war, although the parliament should not concur with his majesty by granting the necessary supplies. I have put the strongest and most improbable case that can be imagined, in order to shew that even here nothing like a dissolution of the connection would take place; the worst that could possibly happen would be, that his majesty must rely upon the British parliament, which approved the war, for those resources which would be refused by the Irish parliament, as condemning the measure; and perhaps some check of this kind would not be amiss to the ambition of the British minister. But in truth, the whole of the objection is merely ideal; no man in his senses who considers the relation of the two countries, can have the smallest apprehensions upon the subject; yet to satisfy the most scrupulous and refining statesman, I am persuaded the parliament of Ireland would consent to set this question also for ever at rest.

But he now advances to the real question, the necessity and benefits of an Union. As a preliminary consideration he enters into a description of the state of Ireland, which, although too highly coloured for truth, is yet in the main unfortunately just: And here I cannot help remarking the strange coincidence between the accounts given on one side of the mis-government of Ireland by Mr. Pitt and his hireling scribbler, and by Mr. Tone, the noted jacobin, on the other. The views of both parties are obvious. One is anxious that we should surrender our independence to France—the other to England. But I trust there is too much spirit and good sense in the country to close with either. She has already repelled one by the courage of her native troops, and the other by the wisdom of her senate: And I am persuaded that with proper vigilance there will always be a sufficient fund of both for an object of such magnitude. What arguments then does Mr. Pitt ad-

vance to shew that this whole fabric of abuses will vanish before an Union, as it were by a touch of Harlequin's wand? As to the claims of the Catholics, when he gets rid of that enigmatical kind of talk which he holds on the subject, and delivers himself intelligibly, I will endeavour to answer him. It is difficult to know what measures he and his hireling scribbler intend to observe with the Catholics between concession and no concession;—but in the midst of all this puzzle I think one thing is plain—that if he can once cajole that body into an approbation of the plan, he will then have ample means in his power of for ever putting an end to Catholic claims. He will at the same time get rid of the question of parliamentary reform, the ladder by which he rose to his present height, and then kicked down. It must be a mighty comfort to both Protestant and Catholic to think, that under that happy system neither of them can budge to alarm the fears or jealousy of the other. This is the true method of restoring content to the nation; and when backed with fifty thousand British troops, cannot fail to produce an entire conviction. Cicero has been praised for the following sentiment—*Pax est tranquilla libertas*: But Cicero was a poor politician; else he must have known that where there is liberty there can be no tranquillity.—And no doubt the vast army in this country will be a great inducement with the British merchant and manufacturer to come and settle among us: for it is well known these men are wonderfully fond of doing their business under the eye of the military, and will therefore flock in multitudes to this great barrack. So that although they have been hitherto rather remiss in coming here to civilize us, and make their own fortunes, notwithstanding the low state of taxation and perfect tranquillity from 1782 to 1793, yet there is every reason to hope the case will be different for the time to come; especially as we may rely on the generosity of the English parliament, who will divert a great part of the trade of that country to this;—in short, Ireland will be rendered such a paradise, that the only danger is of England losing too much by her numerous emigrations;—and thus, as Mr. Pitt justly observes, ample amends will be made us for the continual absence of some hundreds of our first nobility and gentry, (for the *exported members* will be followed by double or treble their number) and for the want of that superintending care of those gentlemen over their tenantry and dependants, which has heretofore been considered as one excellent method of civilization. The non-residence of men possessed of large fortunes in this country is at present one of its most crying grievances; and, were it not for my deference to the overbearing mind of Mr. Pitt, I should think the presence, the attention, the advice, the indulgence, the generosity, and the sympathy of a wealthy landlord would go far in teaching those of humbler rank their duties, in at once civilizing and making them happy. The British minister soars too far above the miseries of our unhappy land to discern their true causes: these lie

much more at hand than he supposes, and never can be removed by his distant remedies of imperial concern and political speculation :—They lie in the excessive price of land and low price of labour, in the want of a just sympathy between the rich and poor: in the extravagance of the former which occasions exactions on the latter, and which naturally engenders in them discontent and vexations, in the gross contempt of religion and piety avowed by the higher and descending to the lower orders; in the precarious tenure of the soil by those who have some little property, and in the utter want of all property on the part of the great mass of the people. I might go on with an enumeration of many others, all beyond the jurisdiction of an imperial or any other parliament; whose omnipotence I suppose does not yet extend to the controul and government of the human mind. It would indeed be a glorious task in men of power to set about the correction of these gross abuses, by framing plans of industry and education for the poor, and setting examples to the rich of moderation and indulgence;—and it is the duty of the British cabinet (who unfortunately take much too large a share in our government) not to encrease those evils by sowing so very liberally among us the seeds of corruption and disunion. Would they but observe this negative virtue, our island would improve fast in manners and virtue.

I should now congratulate my country upon a declaration made in this speech, but that it appears to convey something of a more dangerous nature than it disavows. Mr. Pitt says, that “to any act of force he should never agree”—I hope and believe not—But when I couple this part of his speech with his conduct upon the wise and constitutional motion of Mr. Sheridan, it is too plain that he designs to resort to every thing, but force, for accomplishing his purpose. Already part of the system has been displayed in the removal of some of the oldest and most faithful servants of the crown in Ireland, and in the determined purpose avowed by the minister of never yielding it up during his life: These measures have been fortunate for this parliament and nation—they call loudly upon both to make the subject a *constant and never failing* test of the attachment or indifference of Irishmen to the independence of their native country. It is by such solemn expressions of the public will in the House of Commons, and by the several counties in their elective capacities, that the daring insolence of this minister can be alone restrained, and prevented from setting both kingdoms in a flame; or what other end can be expected from the uncontrouled designs of a man who has the confidence to assert, as he does, that “the whole of it’s (Ireland’s) commercial prosperity depends entirely on the discretion of the legislature of Great Britain, and not on the legislature of Ireland?” What! does he mean that the British parliament can, if they think proper, deprive us of our free trade, or bind us by laws made without the consent of our own Parliament? And does he think that Irishmen will ever resume these badges of

Slavery? Sooner I am convinced would the nation die as one man. Great Britain can certainly regulate her own trade.—She can take off bounties from our manufactures and deny them her market. But has Ireland nothing of this kind in her power?—Let the Minister ask Yorkshire what quantity of woollen goods she annually imports into this country. Let him make similar enquiries from every branch of manufacture in England; and he will soon be convinced how unwise would be the policy of driving a nation, by harsh and exclusive measures, into a system of PROTECTING DUTIES. A brave nation must not be bullied any more than a brave man. The love of peace, and the principle of honor, go hand in hand with both; they will decline nothing proper to maintain the former; they are ready to die in support of the latter.

HAMPDEN.

P. S. Two or three arguments of this speech, viz. the competency of Parliament to make the change; and the Union being the best means of preventing jacobin principles, and French invasion, I have left untouched, these having been fully and ably refuted in several former papers of the Anti-Union, by other hands.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

DINNER at the STRUGGLERS in COOK-STREET.

SIR B—— R——, IN THE CHAIR.

AT six the company assembled numerously—not one of the glorious 104 was absent. The Gentleman who provided the entertainment would take no excuse; some noble Lords and reverend Prelates, were invited as guests. The table was covered with all the delicacies of the season; no expence had been spared, and whoever liked good things, must have been highly gratified. Just as they were about to sit down, a gentleman from W——d——n entered the room, which occasioned a debate. He confessed he had come in mistake, for that he had set out for the dinner of the 111 at Daly’s, but that the coachman had enquired the way from Mr. A——ll, who directed him to the Strugglers; but that he was not sorry for the accident, and hoped he was welcome. This produced some grumbling; however matters were compromised by his being permitted to dine at a side table, at which he sat down to a fine green goose. Sir B. R—— was kept very busy by the great